

REMARKS:

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-9 and 11-17. Claims 1, 8, 9, 16 and 17 are amended herein, and new claim 18 is added. Claims 2 and 10 remain cancelled. No new matter is presented.

Thus, claims 1, 3-9 and 11-18 are pending and under consideration. The rejections are traversed below.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(b):

Claims 1-3, 8-11 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,671,428 (Muranaga). As mentioned above, claims 2 and 10 remain cancelled.

The Examiner maintains the comparison of the Muranaga system limited to providing access to document data to collaborating authors editing the document data with the claimed invention. However, Muranaga is directed to collaborative document processing work where an author editing a document can see the old/new version of the document or the comments attached by the other collaborating authors (see, col. 8, lines 4-11). For example, the author viewing a document selects the document icon on the document editor display window to retrieve the desired document (see, Fig. 3 and corresponding text). That is, Muranaga is limited to uploading a document already being viewed by the collaborating author and does not teach or suggest an interface for retrieving the document data in response to a user requesting review of the document data as taught by the invention.

On page 3 of the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner acknowledges that Muranaga does not explicitly disclose that the results are stored in a searchable list, but indicates that Muranaga discloses storing the results in a database. However, as discussed in detail below, the invention of each of the independent claims 1, 8, 9 and 16-18 includes “**displaying**” the examination results in a searchable examination list (emphasis added).

Further, the Examiner indicates that it is inherent that the results stored in the database are searchable because a database inherently provides searching capabilities. However, the definition provided by the Examiner only indicates that a database is a collection that facilitates searching, sorting, etc. Specifically, the Muranaga system does not teach or suggest that the edited documents are searched through for providing the same to the requester as taught by the claimed invention (see discussion of claims below).

In contrast, independent claim 1 recites, “a first browsing unit disposed at examiners’ side for displaying the examination document” and “a collecting unit collecting examination results of the examination conducted by the examiners.” Claim 1 further recites, “a second browsing unit disposed at a requester’s side searching through the examination results collected and displaying the examination results on a screen in a searchable examination result list responsive to a request having an identifier defined by the requester.” Independent claim 8 and 9 recite similar features.

Similarly, independent claim 16 recites, “receiving a selection of a number of examiners based on the attribute information corresponding to the examiners from a requester” and “requesting examination of the examination document by the selected number of examiners.” Claim 16 further recites that “searchable examination results of the examination document is collected and searched through using an identifier defined by the requester for displaying said results on screens to both the requester and the selected number of examiners.”

Independent claim 17 recites, “setting an electronic document to be examined by a selected number of examiners” and “displaying a browseable result of the examination on a screen in accordance with an identifier defined by the user to allow browsing through the result of the examination including via a web browser.”

Muranaga does not teach or suggest the above-discussed features of the independent claims including searching examination results of document data using “an identifier defined by the requester”, as recited in each of the independent claims 1, 8, 9, 16 and 17 (“user” in claim 17).

It is submitted that the independent claims are patentable over Muranaga.

For at least the above-mentioned reasons, claims depending from the independent claims are patentably distinguishable over Muranaga. The dependent claims are also independently patentable. For example, claim 3 recites that the examination document storing unit sets “a degree of importance of the examination document corresponding to the attribute information of examiners, and the examination document browsing unit controls permission or prohibition of browsing depending on the degree of importance” (see also claim 11 reciting similar features).

Muranaga does not teach or suggest the above-discussed features of claims 3 and 11 including setting “a degree of importance” and controlling permission to the document in accordance therewith.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a):

Claims 4, 5-7, 13-15, 12 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over various combinations of the following: Muranaga, IBM Technical Disclosure Bulletin (IBM Bulletin) and U.S. Patent No. 6,725,426 (Pavlov).

The above discussion relating to the independent claim is incorporated herein to address the dependent claims.

The Examiner acknowledges that Muranaga does not disclose a method in which an XML tag is attached to every phrase in the results or that the original examination file is converted into an XML file, but relies on Pavlov as teaching the same. However, Pavlov is limited to an automatic translation between a word processing document and an XML file based on predefined rules (see, col. 1, line 42 through col. 2, lines 15 and Fig. 5 including corresponding text).

On the other hand, the IBM Bulletin only relates to sending reminders to reviewers of electronic folders regarding due dates and due time (see, page 2) based on specifications set by an originator of the folder (see, page 6).

As mentioned above, claim 17 recites, “displaying a browseable result of the examination in accordance with an identifier defined by the user to allow browsing through the result of the examination including via a web browser.”

The cited references, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the claimed document examination method and apparatus including searching through results of examination based on “an identifier” from the requester, as recited in each of the independent claims.

For at least the same reasons, the dependent claims are also patentably distinguishable over the cited references.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

NEW CLAIM:

New claim 18 has been added to recite, "receiving a document to be examined by selected examiners and formatting the document into XML" and "storing the document based on an XML tag identified by a requester submitting the document for examination." Claim 18 further recites, "retrieving an examination result of the document using the XML tag and displaying to the requester responsive to a request." This, for example, enables efficient retrieval of an examination result of a particular document since the result is retrieved based on "an XML tag identified by a requester submitting the document for examination."

The cited references, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the above-discussed features of claim 18 including "retrieving an examination result of the document using the XML tag and displaying to the requester responsive to a request."

Therefore, it is submitted that new claim 18 is patentably distinguishable over the cited references.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.


Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 02/05/07

By: 
Temnit Afework
Registration No. 58,202

1201 New York Avenue, NW, 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501